

## Holiday Rx: gratitude, self-compassion, and connection!



As the holiday season ramps up, keeping up with your health routines can get tricky. By all means, stick with a healthful diet and exercise regimen whenever you can—not just for the long-term benefits but because they’ll help sustain you through the swirl of family gatherings, seasonal parties, and whatever else is on your holiday calendar. It’s also a good time of year to contemplate and cultivate the “softer” side of well-being. Though less quantifiable than, say, 150 minutes

of exercise a week, the habits below are powerful tools for good health and happiness.

**Gratitude.** Instead of comparing yourself to others and lamenting where your life falls short, focus on what you *do* have, what you *can* do, and simple kindness: a table full of food and family, renewed energy after an illness, the stranger who helped you pick up dropped groceries. Goodness is there if you look for it, and focusing on the positive aspects of your day or your life can lower stress and buoy well-being.

**Self-compassion.** Treat yourself the way you’d treat a close friend—with kindness and compassion, rather than criticism. People who practice self-compassion are less likely to experience depression and anxiety and more likely to follow healthy habits.

**Social support.** Relationships give life meaning, and they’re vitally important for good physical and mental health. Reconnect with supportive friends or family members over the holidays, and keep the relationships going with regular visits or phone calls.

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